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WILLIAM B. REED,

OF CHESTNUT HILL,

PHILADELPHIA.

EXPERT

IN THE ART OF

EXHUMATION OF THE DEAD.

RE-PRINTED FROM THE LONDON EDITION.
1867.

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The extreme difficulty of getting *any thing* done in London, during the Easter Holidays, at printing offices, as elsewhere, has caused an additional delay of ten days in getting this ready for transmission to Philadelphia, to my extreme annoyance. It will now go out in the Steamer of Saturday, 4th May. Printed here, for convenience sake, it will be circulated at home, as extensively as I can possibly spread it among my friends, but only at home, for I have no desire to invoke the judgment of a foreign tribunal. I shall also address copies to the Philadelphia Library, The Merchants' Exchange, The Philadelphia Athenæum, and Mercantile Library, for public use, if the gentlemen in charge of those public Institutions, two of whom at least I hope I may include among my friends, will permit them to lie on their tables. The Pamphlet, which has provoked this, is, I learn, publicly offered for sale. The one in my possession was bought and sent to me.

B. R.

London, 2*d May*, 1867.

My attention has been called, not by the writer, to a Pamphlet entitled "*President Reed of Pennsylvania, a Peply to Mr. George Bancroft and Others. February, A. D.*, 1867. *Philadelphia.*" The Pamphlet is the production of William B. Reed, of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, whose name appears to the Introduction, and among the "Others" included in his malignant notice, are General John Cadwalader of Revolutionary fame, Doctor Benjamin Rush, and his Brother, Judge Jacob Rush. It is not the first time that these three names have been associated.

When Judge Rush was once treated rudely on the Bench of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia, by a member of the Bar, and unable from his position to make the proper reply, a son of Doctor Rush, then Attorney General of Pennsylvania, and present in Court, rebuked him in fit terms. The assailant was a man of spirit and called Mr. Rush to account. The call led to a meeting, on which occasion the latter was accompanied to the field by his life-long friend, whom he loved, and whose pall he subsequently bore, General Thomas Cadwalader, son of General John Cadwalader. It may be added, as honorable to both parties to that encounter, that their subsequent relations through life, were those of gentlemen.

Mr. Reed has therefore publicly revived, at the end of more than fifty years, an association of names which the descendants of Doctor Rush cherish, and of which they have cause to be proud, for if there be on the roll of those most eminent in Philadelphia for every quality of the gentleman—truth, honor, high spirit,—one more significant of each than that of Cadwalader, it would require a "truffle dog" even more industrious, if possible, than Mr. Reed, to discover it.

The late Lord Abinger once said, on the Bench, of one of the Counsel in a cause before him, the present Lord Chancellor of England, that if ever it should fall to his lot to be assailed, he hoped it might be in company with that learned gentleman, for

that the high character of Mr. Thesiger would be a sufficient defence against any charge levelled at any associate of his.

Hence, when Doctor Rush and Judge Rush are called to share with General John Cadwalader the bitterness of Mr. Reed's wrath, the first thought which naturally arises is, that the two former are at least in good company, and that if there be any truth in the old *noscitur a sociis*, which, to be exact, should here read *socio*, they have nothing to lose by the juxtaposition. It is to be hoped that their joint memories may yet survive the thrusts of the assassin-like pen of William B. Reed.

Now I have very little to say. I shall not waste words upon this gentleman. The Rebellion being at an end, though not according to the programme which Mr. Reed would have arranged, a new excitement was needed. He has volunteered to supply one. As an excuse, some will be apt to think, however erroneously, for again overwhelming the American People with the renown of "President" Reed; at any rate for a fresh tussle with fate "to make Pennsylvania proud of one of her sons," encouraged by the satisfactory assurance that his former labors in that field had at least "not been in vain," the descendant of the "President" has inflicted upon the long suffering public a fresh issue of one hundred and thirty-two pages. I shall try hard to restrict myself to ten or a dozen.

Mr. Reed's avowed purpose is, to vindicate the fame of an ancestor of his, against whom a good many hard things were said a great while ago. But with an admission of strong feelings which may have affected his judgment (p. 126), and the gradual loss of his temper and reckoning, he has gone a long way further, and very far out of his way. Abandoning his "merely defensive" positions, he has sought the opposite, and has plunged into offensive warfare, with the zeal of an enthusiast, laying about him, right and left, like a maniac, at almost every thing and everybody, and with an utter disregard of names if not things.

In the course of his frantic gestures, he has run against an ancestor of mine, and here he pauses to take breath. Gathering up his energies for a fresh outpouring of venom, he proceeds, in language of scurrility, rarely surpassed, and in defiance of truth, to

assail the reputation of one, against whom, as far as my knowledge extends, no defamatory word was ever before uttered, and who has slept undisturbed in the tomb since the year 1813. I am wrong. There was one exception. Some forty years ago, John Randolph of Roanoke, whose name conveys his eulogy, of whom Mr. Reed knows something, and whom he appears to have made his model, in the course of his daily crusades in Congress against the quick and the dead, which gathered the members around him, and packed the galleries daily with men and boys, pretty much as you would now go to witness any other performance in the ring,—Mr. Randolph, in an unlucky moment, stumbled upon Doctor Rush's grave, and proceeded to disinter him, pretty much as Mr. Reed, his sole rival in the art of exhumation, has just attempted to do the same thing. There was this difference, however. Each made use of the same tools, detraction and calumny, with an attempt at ridicule. But the former was a master workman, and, from long experience, handled his in the style of an adept. The latter, though equally ambitious to shine in the art, and though, as a sop to his vanity, I have elevated him to the rank of an expert, handled his clumsily in comparison, exhibiting unmistakeable signs of the novice, as much in execution as plan. I incline to think that the "Orator of Roanoke," as he was called by some, the "Orator of the Human Race," by others, got for his pains, on that memorable occasion, from a high-spirited son of Doctor Rush, rather more than he bargained for, and I incline to the opinion that others thought so too.

But the offence which Mr. Reed has committed is still of the first degree. It has no extenuating circumstances. It is brim full of malice. For this he has earned retribution, the severest that I can inflict. For this he shall have it.

With President Reed; the charges brought against him at the close of the Revolutionary War; their revival since; his public services and many titles to distinction, from the charge of omitting to enumerate, and make the most of, the least of which, the grandson is certainly free; with all this, I have nothing to do. Never having had any connection, direct or indirect, with the controversy in reference to Mr. Reed's Grandfather; never having

cared enough about it, or about Mr. Reed's ancestor or himself, to waste five minutes upon either, I should find myself destitute of the first element necessary to approach such a discussion—knowledge.

To be sure, knowledge may be acquired or *assumed*, in which latter respect I should not have far to go for an example, though in such case it be no longer "power." Even those wise old Greeks were liable to be swayed by their inclinations, just as the feelings sometimes affect the judgment, and the

Ὁ τι βουλεται, τουθ ἑκαστος και οιεται,

or in the simpler Latin, which to one of Mr. Reed's scholary pretensions is of course unnecessary, the

Facile credimus, quod volumus,

is as true, it seems, now, as in those classic days.

But I am deterred from any further allusion to the subject matter of this Pamphlet, by another cause.

Of the direct male descendants of Dr. Rush, there remain now, alas, but four, minors excepted.

Of these, one is the last surviving son, a gentleman now past eighty. He has caused it to be intimated to me that he wishes any notice of this Pamphlet "that *may become* necessary," to be left to HIM. It is my duty to treat with every consideration and respect, any such wish on his part, and I shall do so.

If he decides on a reply to the Pamphlet, I well know how he will handle it and the writer. I can imagine how he will scathe him, as that other "Porcupine," scarcely more fretful, William Cobbett, was scathed and blasted by public opinion, on the occasion to which Mr. Reed refers, though, with the *suppressio veri* of a pettifogger, he has omitted to remind his readers of it.

If my Uncle decides otherwise, it will be that *he*, at least, is consistent in a theory upon which few men act; which I have often heard him maintain; but which was never better condensed than in an illusion I once heard him make, with characteristic point and brevity, not indeed to Barabbas by name, but to men like William B. Reed—"*now this man was a* POLITICIAN."

Speaking, however, for the *third* generation of the descendants

of Doctor Rush, of whom I am the senior in years, of those who bear his name,—now, alas, *much* the senior—and who have consented to let me speak for them, and only waited for me to speak, I should be untrue to all my hereditary and native instincts, and theirs, to let this impudent *Pamphleteer* off without the chastisement he deserves, passing wholly by, for the reason given, the subject of his labored and often unintelligible *Pamphlet;* the more unintelligible, often, as having been written under those strong feelings which affect the judgment.

Yes. This man was, and is, indeed, a politician, and here we have the *gist* of the case: a desperate, double-dealing, dethroned, disappointed, *despised politician!*

A word or two of his public importance, which must necessarily affect, to a greater or less extent, the weight of his statements.

A traitor to his Party, to begin with; the only Party at one time disposed to honor him by elective trust, and through whose generous aid, at a time when, like poor Mo in "Flying Scud," he was "young and innocent, he did manage to attain, for a little while, the high distinction of a rather uncomfortable seat in the lower branch of the Legislature of Pennsylvania; and greatly, certainly, must he have distinguished himself there, for, in spite of all his dextrous and unscrupulous manœuvres, and morbid ambition, he has never had the opportunity of exposing himself, and abusing public confidence, as a legislator, since, as far as I can now remember; a traitor to his former friends; hated, therefore, by that great Party, and by most of them, since and now, with an intense hatred; a worse than incubus, a dead weight, a living scandal, to that other great Party, into whose time-honored ranks he has since endeavored to foist himself, after having made it the mark of his jeers and gibes, and expended upon it his malignity, for a quarter of a century; that great Party which, though it has barely tolerated, has *never trusted*, and *always been shy of*, him; for his mission to "the other side of the globe" did not originate in *popular* democratic confidence; *never allowed him to speak for them*, certainly on any important occasion, within my recollection; never allowed him to write for them, *under his own name*, when they could possibly help it, if I am rightly informed; never honored

him with a nomination to Congress; never permitted him, as far as I know, even to go as a delegate to a National or State Convention; and there are those who know what bitter heart-burnings this gave rise to in our modern Pamphleteer; would not have him at a private meeting of members of the Democratic Party held in Philadelphia while the Rebellion raged, and attended equally by those who supported, and those who honorably opposed, the War;* a traitor to the Country from the hour that Fort Sumpter was fired upon;† rejoicing in every rebel victory; disparaging and sneering at every Union triumph; openly proclaiming his preference for a divided Empire; not only giving every possible aid and comfort (in his power!) to the cause of those in arms against the Union, but absolutely ridiculing, and seeking to discourage, the noble effort to alleviate and soothe the lingering miseries of those who wasted, and threw away, health and life in its defence;‡ upon whose fresh and honorable graves no tear of William B. Reed descended; but rather cruel mockeries and fiendish exultation; for all which, and more, it was with the utmost difficulty that he was saved, at one time, from ignominious expulsion from Chestnut Hill; an atmosphere contaminated by his presence, and a society which he dis-

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*I will violate no confidence. All I shall say, and more, was soon publicly known. The meeting was held in 1863. I was at it. The object was to aid in re-establishng the Democratic Party upon its ancient and only true foundation, that of a War Party, and pledge it, as heretofore, like Decatur to the Country, if THE UNION were the Country, "RIGHT OR WRONG." I was one of those who exerted themselves in getting up the meeting, and this gave me a right to submit one condition. I made it a stipulation that Mr. Reed was not to be there, because I thought his mere presence would retard, and might even defeat, the object. I disclaimed personal disrespect to him. The stipulation was agreed to, and our ex-Member of the Legislature, ex-District Attorney, ex-Whig, ex-Minister to China, was not at the Meeting.

†Let me not be misunderstood here. To stigmatize as traitors to the Country all who opposed the War, would be unjust, and is far from my intention. While I deeply regretted such a course on the part of so many of my political, some of whom were, and still are, among the warmest of my personal, friends, and told them so, I felt that they had the same right of opinion that I claimed. But Mr. Reed went further than he who went furthest. His opposition was as bitter and malignant, as was his opposition to the Democratic Party in former days It was more. It was open and flagrant preference for the cause of the Rebellion. If Mr. Reed has ties of blood to the South, I have not heard it. I have; many and cherished. I grew up among Southern boys, and many of my most early recollections centre in Southern homes. I never lost my attachment to the South, and never shall. I condemned their treason, and thought the Government was right, no matter who was at the head of it, to maintain the integrity of our great Empire at any cost. I avowed those opinions, in every way. Now that the South have submitted, and acknowledged their great crime, I would welcome them back, with the magnanimity and generosity which the brave can afford to the brave. If Mr. Reed could only pass a few moths here *now*, and witness the high estimation and respect in which our great Country is everywhere held, even he would wonder how he ever could have preferred the C. S. A. as a substitute for the glorious old U. S. A. with all its proud associations, which make the very heart strings vibrate!

‡Here, again, I will violate no confidence, but I do not understand that Mr. Reed ever made any secret of his opposition to the measures at that time everywhere in progress for the relief of our sick and suffering soldiers. I suppose he would say that he was opposed to *he cause* in which they were engaged!

honored and disgraced; this, this is the man, who, rioting in his shame, and *assuming knowledge where he has it not*, now dares, in the face of the Nation, to trample upon the graves of those who helped to found it, consecrated—I will say, for I speak here as an AMERICAN CITIZEN, proud of his birthright, and not as a grandson of one of the silent dead—consecrated by the patriotic recollections of a whole people, and the lapse of more than half a century.

Shame upon him! Shame upon him!

Be it for him, ruthless violator of the Tomb, upon the mouldering tenants of which he satiates his depraved appetite with hyena-like voracity; be it for him, all prospect of political elevation, the coveted goal of his life, having been hopelessly crushed by the weight of his political infamy, to seek to scramble out from under the ruins, into the gaze for which he still daily lives and moves and pants, by reproducing, in every form of the book-maker's and pamphleteer's art, with the aid of every "homely testimonial," his twice-told tale of an *ancestor's* claims to renown. Into *that* field I shall not follow him. To something more than the indulgent estimate—though accorded by two generations—to the higher test of the sense of justice, of his countrymen and mine, I leave the public services, such as others must decide them to have been, the public and private sacrifices, at a period of our infant history the most momentous, and unsullied memory, of Doctor Benjamin Rush. If these are remembered, it is enough; if not, I am not the one to recall them. It may be taken for granted that I could do so, but, however grateful the task, his descendants prefer to leave it to other tongues and pens.

But while silent as regards any further reference to *my* ancestor, I have not done with the aggressor. Mr. Reed appears to have counted largely upon the forbearance of Dr. Rush's descendants. He may have miscalculated largely.

Responsible for what I write, I claim no privilege of the Sanctuary. The allusion *may possibly be understood by Mr. Reed*, for "Sabbath Bells" have summoned both to the same Sacred Edifice at Chestnut Hill, and it has happened that when one has gone out, the other has remained. It is *barely possible* that upon this knowledge he may have been willing to risk his own immunity,

as far as I was concerned. In this respect my views are my own, and have not been hastily formed. They have descended to me, and I now hold them on conviction. I believe that a readiness to assert them, where the necessity is forced upon us through no act of our own, involves no departure from other and far higher opinions on other and far higher subjects, and may co-exist with charity to all; and that we are as much justified in resisting a deliberate attempt to take away character, as a deliberate attempt to take away life, and in resisting to the same extent, whether in our own person or that of one we love, living or dead. I cannot imagine that we were placed in this world to be at the mercy of every invader of one, more than the other; and it has always seemed to me that if a social regulation, existing before we came into the world, has been found in its operation, however deplorable the resort to it, and however anxiously to be avoided, to act as some check upon such invaders, there is some extenuation for such a regulation. It is with the utmost reluctance, and a full sense of its delicacy, that I here say all this, but it is drawn from me. All whose opinions I value, will know how to appreciate it, as well as the position in which I am placed. Perhaps I also owe it to some, whose opinions I hold in high respect, who may possibly see these pages, and think differently. This, I confess, is the chief motive with me, and will, I hope, be my excuse.

As little do I claim exemption on the score of impaired health. Were it not well known in Philadelphia that I came abroad, under the advice of more than one eminent physician, to seek relief, and, if possible, ultimate recovery, from a protracted malady of nearly three years' duration, and that I have been since September in this Metropolis under medical treatment, I should scorn to speak here of *health*. But the same necessity is forced upon me, in justice to myself. It is precisely because all this *is* so well known, that I make the allusion, to guard against any inference to my disadvantage, which might by possibility suggest itself to any one otherwise. I am forced to say, then, that repeated returns of the same physical prostration during the last month, and utter inability, at such times, to use the pen, have alone prevented my finishing this brief paper much sooner, since I first saw Mr. Reed's Pamphlet on the

30th of March. How soon I shall be able to return to the United States, I am utterly unable to say. My intention on leaving home, as many of my friends know, was to be gone a year or two, at least, perhaps more, with a view of thoroughly testing the benefit of thorough change, not only by a sufficient residence in this country, but on the continent of Europe, where I have not yet been. I am already a vast deal better; sometimes, for days and weeks, comparatively quite well. Let it be distinctly understood, therefore, that my condition is no bar to a readiness to meet any result as the consequence of what I here write, which could be as well met here as any where. I shall remain where I am till the middle of June. Let me add, that I shall not permit myself, at my present distance, to be drawn into any newspaper, or other controversy, *in print*. I have no idea of giving to an assailant, three thousand miles off, any such advantage over me. If silent, therefore, while abroad, under any such attacks, my silence will be understood.

Let the aggressor remember that he has brought this upon himself. For the initiative, I am not responsible. I never injured him, or his. *He* has flung down the glove. These "*thorns which he has reaped*," if he has the sensibility to feel as such all that I here say of him, by a slight paraphrase of the beautiful line of the Italian Poet, "*are of the tree I planted*," not. The personal wrong he has done to my aged Uncle, to me, and to others of equal degree in descent, ladies as well as gentlemen, in the outrage perpetrated upon the memory of one whose blood flows in the veins of each and all, has been wanton, malignant, unprovoked, and I design the chastisement to be as severe as merited.

And now for the allusion in the Pamphlet to the Brother, the affectionate Brother, of Dr. Rush, Judge Rush, than whom a more upright man never lived. His hand once in, Mr. Reed appears to be unable to extricate it. Hence he goes on to tear away, "like mad," and the name I bear seems to excite his special hostility, whenever and wherever he encounters it, the possessor being no longer among living men. Judge Rush has no lineal descendant, who bears his name, to speak for him. The task shall be mine.

A scene is described, (p. 70,) which, though in the words of an-

other, Mr. Reed adopts, and approvingly and sarcastically quotes, wherein "The President"—not the President of the United States, —"President" Reed, whose name does not appear in the list of the American Presidents, "*roared out in a peal of laughter*," on the introduction of Judge Rush's name, in a conversation which is related. The whole narrative, extending through a page of small type, though sadly deficient in point, is intended to be exquisitely satirical, and is, therefore, just into Mr. Reed's hand. Adopting it, as he does, without the change of an if or a but, or the omission of a line or an asterick, I am quite satisfied to take the will for the deed. Next time, to be sure,—say on the occasion of the next "periodical revival" by himself of the fame of his ancestor—the narrative might be none the worse for a little classical brevity, as, for instance,

> When Dido found that Æneas would not come,
> She wept in silence, and was Di-do-dum.

For the sake of the narrator, a collateral kinsman, if I mistake not, of Mr. Reed's, in the ascending line, whom, as long since dead and gone, I have no intention of attacking, I am sure that a generous public, appreciating the motive of the collateral descendant, would pardon a slight liberty with the text, to give it a more scholarly finish. But we will not be particular.

I am indebted to the incident for the explanation of something I could never before understand; something which has often puzzled, sometimes amused, me, and it furnishes a fair occasion for one of Touchstone's "retorts."

I refer to the inveterate, and at times almost unseemly, habit of this gentleman of *giggling*—at nothing!

No matter when, no matter where, in court, in the street, in the cars, by day, by night, our "President's" grandson is always up for a *giggle* at nothing. And only give him an audience; let an unsuspecting youth, or any one whom he thinks he can overpower by the blaze of his intellect, or depth of his scholarship,

> In Classic or in Gothic lore,

be so unfortunate as to take a seat by him in the aforesaid cars, and you shall speedily hear, and if you are lucky, witness into the bargain, the inevitable *giggle* rise to a roar or go off in a squeal—

but always at nothing! or (*q. i. e.*) something which he has himself oracularly uttered for the benefit of his luckless co-mate and brother in limbo.

I now for the first time understand it. He can't help it. He is to be pitied rather than derided. The habit is hereditary. It has come down to him from the "President"—the roaring "President." What wonder if the ancestor "roared" and "pealed" at nothing, that the grandson should giggle and squeal at the same thing! I almost wonder that some of the prolific lovers of fun, have never yet worked up the ancestral propensity into his nomenclature, by way of a middle name for example, in full, for which there would be ample historical precedent. Being a short word, it would have one of the ingredients of the soul of wit, and three of the six letters being the same, there would be alphabetical economy to recommend it.

The adaptation of sound to sense would almost rival some of those celebrated lines of the illustrious Poet of ancient Greece, as in

βη δακεων κατα θινα παλυφλοισβοιο θαλασσης,

or, take a line of the celebrated Mantuan,

Sternitur, exanimatque tremens, procumbit humi bos.

The amusing transformations, abbreviations and sobriquets, would have been endless. The "Goat and Compasses" as it swings on the sign boards of England, known to have been derived from "God encompasseth us," or "The Bag o' nails," better known in ancient days as "The Bacchanalians," would have been nothing to it.

To my friends in Philadelphia, the city of my birth and residence, who know me; and I never knew how many I had, until within the last three memorable years; to all who know of me; all who know that to give intentional offence is as little my habit, as to put up with deliberate wrong, I submit what I have here written, under provocation as unjustifiable as it has been enormous. By their impartial verdict I am content to abide.

I too have "strong feelings," and am equally conscious of having written under their influence. Who would not, in such a case?

But, unlike the writer of the Pamphlet, they have not impaired, or in any way "affected my judgment." On the contrary, I believe I can yet take a survey of this gentleman in a calm, if not "a judicial spirit," for the latter of which, he himself frankly confesses (p. 126) that he scarcely hopes to get credit. Hence, while re-asserting all I have thus far said, I should be untrue to myself not to add that I have said it with deep regret. My relations with Mr. Reed for many years, though never intimate, have at least been of a character not to provoke hostility. True, I never particularly liked or admired him. I always thought him very much over-rated, and as a natural consequence a good deal spoiled. He was too much given to *sneering* at everything and every body, for me. There have been occasions, I must confess, when Johnson's "*shy reciprocation of incivilities, without the security of peace or boldness of war*," would not inaptly have described our relations. But that was a good while ago, and remembering what the late Mr. Wilberforce used to say, that "disjunctive conjunctions" are not confined to grammar, but sometimes find their way into the social element, I managed to get along with Mr. Reed, on the whole, pretty well. *Alii aliorum onera portate*, (it will be borne in mind that I am dealing with a scholar), addressed to the men of Galatia eighteen hundred years ago, was a precept worthy of the illustrious apostle; but if, in practice, poor human nature, with every humble aspiration, sometimes faint under the load, it may be a consolation to human weakness to believe, on reasonable grounds, that that other great precept, equally uttered by the same divinely commissioned lips to the Roman people, at a subsequent date, it is thought, "*if it be possible, as much as lieth in you*, live peaceably with all men," implies, certainly, that it is *not always* possible, and that the *whole man* is not always equal to it. But to show that my feelings have not impaired, or affected my judgment, I am willing to give even this aggressor credit for some good qualities. I used to hear that he had warm domestic affections. Of this I heard much in 1854, at a time at which I, and the entire community of Philadelphia, deeply sympathized with him, to which he has referred in his Pamphlet, (p. 11). I was not, I think, behind others, in offering him on that occasion the poor tribute of my sympathy. I am bound

to remember too, and I do remember gratefully, that when in 1862, I in turn was a heart-broken sufferer from the sudden and violent tearing asunder of the cherished tie of a life-time, equally near and dear to me, as his to him, a shock which well nigh made a wreck of me, Mr. Reed was among the first to offer the same to me and mine, (and sympathy is always most acceptable at such moments) which I then thought sincere. I do not think, therefore, that what I have here written, at all calls for the same admission as in the Pamphlet which has produced it, that the feelings involved may have gotten the better of, or even affected, the judgment. I have written not only on full reflection, but in the full exercise of every faculty.

Since those days Mr. Reed has assumed (he is prone to *assume*) a new character, the last of his many parts being that of a calumniator of the dead—the dead of '76! I wish him joy of his new vocation. He has sown the wind, and ought to have known what he might expect to reap. Let him make the most of it.

BENJAMIN RUSH.

22 *Princes St., Cavendish Square,*
London. 24th April, 1867.

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